



News Release

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Willow Beach NFH and Partners are Working Together to Provide Fish for Local Anglers

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has partnered with the Arizona Game and Fish (AZGFD), Mohave County and the local community to provide a short term solution for releasing rainbow trout into local waters, after critical set-backs at Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery (NFH) last November. To help with the effort, AZGFD has offered to provide at least 21,000 six to eight inch rainbow trout to be reared at Willow Beach NFH. The trout will be released at around eleven inches each into the tailwaters below Davis Dam this coming fall.

“In spite of the massive damage that has occurred at this facility, hatchery staff have worked hard to keep operations running with limited resources. Now, with this partnership, we will be able to continue to support the local community and economy through this collaborative fish stocking effort,” said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Southwest Regional Director Dr. Benjamin Tuggle. “We are pleased that we were able to work with our partners and find an amiable solution.”

The Willow Beach NFH traditionally has used water from the Colorado River to raise rainbow trout for state recreational angling programs. On Thursday, November 21, 2013, the elevation in Lake Mohave was low enough to starve the rainbow trout production water pumps at Willow Beach NFH, and while staff were able to save 11,105 fish by quickly evacuating them, there was a loss of 20,880 fish.

Problems with the pumps had occurred once before on August 12, 2013, when sometime during the night the pipeline at Willow Beach NFH that delivers water to raceways became clogged with sediment and vegetation killing thousands of pounds of rainbow trout.

These massive and unexpected fish losses made it impossible for the hatchery to provide fish as it had in previous years. The rainbow trout that AZGFD will provide will help to offset the impact on the local community.

To Hildy Angius, Chair of the Board of Supervisors in Mohave County, having fish for anglers could not be more important to her community. “We are a tourism community,” said Angius. “The recreational fishing and tourism industry makes up over 30% of our economy. If the fish aren’t there, fishermen go someplace else. More importantly, we are pleased that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has committed to working with Arizona Game and Fish and

Mohave County to find a solution to fix the water delivery system at the Willow Beach Fish Hatchery.”

“These are challenging times,” said Stewart Jacks, Fish and Wildlife Service Southwest Region's Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Assistant Regional Director. “But by working together we will be able to make things happen in a positive way for anglers. I am exceedingly proud of the dedication and professionalism of our hatchery staff at Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery and the staff at the AZGFD.”

Although this is only a short term solution, the Service and its partners will continue to look for ways to help the hatchery to be able provide fish for local anglers in the future.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

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